

Upper Wisconsin Country

By A. G. Ellis

The "Upper Wisconsin," is a term usually applied to the country bordering this stream from Point Bas, upwards to its source, at Lac Vieux Desert; a distance north and south of one hundred and fifty miles. But our descriptions will, for the most part, refer to the lower portion of this area, lying in Marathon, Portage and Wood counties—the very centre of the State.

It is remarkable what a tendency is often manifest, to invest new and unexplored regions—*terra incognita*—with all the habiliments and character of the terrible; such regions are too generally set down as impenetrable swamps, tenanted only with wild animals, and unfitted for man's abode. It is within the recollection of the writer, that nearly the whole State of Michigan, was reported by an officer of the War Department, as one unbroken lagoon; soon after which, an immense map made its appearance, laying down nearly the whole central area of that beautiful State as a *swamp*. The progress of settlement dissipated these ideal marshes, and redeemed the State. The same unfounded notions have prevailed, to a considerable extent, with regard to large portions of Wisconsin, including this same country, of which we now propose to write.

In 1847, Mr. Owen, the geologist, characterized it as a desert of sands, unapproachable by the agriculturist; and but a few months ago, a respectable gentleman in one of the